

A COMPLETE STORY EVERY SATURDAY

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FICTION SECTION

THREE SECTIONS.

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SECTION TWO.

THE MAN WHO KNEW NOTHING ON EARTH

A STARRY LOVE STORY

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CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

JOHN TEMPLE, an astronomer and mathematician and victim of circumstances.

Evalyn Wells, an heiress, four and twenty, pretty and devoted to the memory of a boy admirer of her childhood.

BESSIE, her maid, who assists in the working out of the plot.

SIRIUS, a canine listener, in entire sympathy with his master.

PRINCESS BLUE MOUSE, the companion of Sirius and pet of the Wells farm.

MR. MARSDON, a patron of education, with an unsettled difference with Temple's father.

DEAN THOMAS, a college official, under obligations to Marsdon.

CATHERINE FARRELL, a young artist, a friend of Evalyn Wells.

THE blinds of Rockhouse were thrown wide for the first time in seven years. The month was June and Evalyn Wells was four-and-twenty.

Evalyn had been summoned from abroad by the trustee of her father's estate. Because of an irreparable quarrel back in the spring of 1917, the late Senator had left Evalyn as near penniless as would be compatible with her station in life.

Diagonally across the road stood the other house at the Corners. This building had formed the Annex of the County Poorhouse, whose main structure had disappeared.

A gaunt, pallid man, with two days' stubble on his face, appeared in the doorway, and emitted a quivering, pedantic imitation of a whistle. A yellow streak shot around the corner of the thin little house, then the man closed the door softly.

Outside there was the throb of a motor, the ring of a dinner gong.

"Meat, butter, eggs . . ." boomed the itinerant butcher. "I don't come again till Saturday."

"Two of us, three days," calculated the man. "Six steaks will do."

An hour later he lifted two large steaks from the top of a rusty, lukewarm stove in the basement and quietly replaced them in their original wrapper. "For myself I could do well enough. But I must think of you, my friend. . . ."

Princess Blue Mouse raised her head from her paws, sniffed, and raced across the tennis court. Evalyn glanced up from her self-imposed labor of weeding the tennis court.

"Shades of Abraham Lincoln!" gasped the girl.

"Madam . . ." faltered the man, "you live here."

"Yes," Evalyn smiled. "I've been expecting you all day. Have you had anything to eat?"

"I was about to speak of that" . . .

"We've finished our lunch," the girl informed him. She assured him she would run to the house and tell the maid. In the mean time he could start where she had left off. "Pull them like this." She demonstrated. "Now try. Shake the roots and pat down the earth with your foot. Don't leave any holes. Start here."

The girl paused among the flowering pear trees. "Your name?" she called.

He raised his head from the court. "John . . ." he stammered.

"Bessie," Evalyn said to her little maid. "Some one has sent us a man. He'll eat us out of house and home. But it can't be helped."

LATER, Bessie appeared with a flushed face.

"That man, Miss Evalyn, I'm afraid of him."

He had given half his dinner to the dog that was running wild with Princess Blue Mouse, and he brought a bag full of things—groceries, six steaks!

"Six steaks!" echoed Evalyn. The maid had got hold of the newspaper. "There are two escaped convicts. . . . And have you noticed how pale he is?"

Evalyn started slowly for the tennis court. And she told herself that the gaunt man laboring with the weeds made a very pleasant picture.

"If you'll come with me to the corn-house," said Evalyn presently to him. "we'll get a bag of salt."

Several large white bags, stenciled "Hay Salt—112 lbs.," lay in the corn-house. John took hold of one by the ears.

"I'm sorry," he admitted, a deep flush spreading over his pallid face. "I can't lift it."

Together they dragged the sack to the door sill. "Now get the wheelbarrow. Put it under the door and pull the bag into it."

Evalyn directed the man to get between the shafts, to lift, to push. The wheelbarrow, on a slight eminence, rushed forward, careened, turned in a circle, and only Evalyn's agility saved her.

"John," she cried, "are you trying to

make me ridiculous, or don't you know anything on earth?"

"I'm afraid I don't know anything on earth," said the man, "but I'll try to learn."

THE chores finished, the man with towel and soap and fresh clothing passed along the road to the willows, where he gave himself and his dog a scrubbing. After supper he ascended the hill back of his

house. There he stood gazing into the clear June sky.

"My canine friend," he said solemnly to the dog, "I am not a farmer. My father was an astronomer. A little man with a thin white beard and eyes as limp and faded as a faded blue napkin, white fringed; an old man at fifty, standing beside a long shining brass telescope where two great thoroughfares converged, Broadway and Fifth Avenue. And there each clear night during eight years I stood be-



DR. MARSDON KISSED EVALYN. "WHO IS THE COMPOSITE OF LINCOLN AND GRANT?" HE SMILED.